

Report to	Calne Area Board
Date of Meeting	20th March 2018
Title of Report	Community Asset Transfer – Marden House, Calne

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of the property known as Marden House, Calne in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

Calne Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by The Marden House Centre Trustees for the transfer of the property known as Marden House, Calne. See application at Appendix 1 and summary of Community Consultation at Appendix 2.

Reasons for Proposal

This proposal supports and implements Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy.

Recommendation

Having considered the application and the views of Council officers, the Area Board is invited to approve the transfer subject to:

- The lease being upon such terms as Wiltshire Council Estates considers reasonable.
- Being able to be terminated by Wiltshire Council if the property ceases to be used for community purposes.
- Each party bearing their own costs

Purpose of Report

1. Calne Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by the Marden House Trustees for the transfer of the property known as Marden House, Calne. See application at Appendix 1, summary of Community Consultation at Appendix 2.

Background

2. Wiltshire Council is supporting the principle of the transfer of community assets in order to empower and strengthen local communities. Wiltshire Council believes that transferring appropriate public assets to communities leads to more responsive services that better meet local people's priorities.
3. Transfer of an asset can also provide the opportunity to lever more resources into a community and provide a more accessible and responsive base from which to deliver local services.
4. A community group or organisation can benefit from greater financial stability and build confidence through having ownership (or long-term security through a lease) of a physical asset. This financial sustainability can help the organisation become less dependent on grants, provide security for further borrowing and opportunities for further growth.
5. Typically, organisations that would be considered appropriate are Voluntary and Community Groups/Associations, Town or Parish Councils, Trusts or Charities, or Social Enterprise Groups.
6. The property which is the subject of this Community Asset Transfer application has been used by the Marden House Centre Trustees for 25 years.
7. Currently the property hosts a wide variety of community groups, projects, activities and events, including the Calne Memory Club, Mill Race Club (for adults living with learning difficulties), and A Place for us (Youth Club for young people living with SEND), which have all previously been supported by the Area Board, they will be unaffected by this transfer.

The Application before the Area Board

8. The application from the Marden House Centre Trustees is attached at Appendix 1.
9. The application was submitted in accordance with Wiltshire Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
10. The Community Engagement Manager has consulted with Strategic Assets & Facilities Management, who have undertaken appropriate conversations with service departments across the Council. They have concluded that this is not a strategic asset. Therefore, a decision can be made by Calne Area Board.
11. The applicant has undertaken local consultation with all user groups and visitors to the centre (approx. 200 responses have been received); see summary at Appendix 2.

The views of Council officers

Strategic Asset & Facilities Management (SAFM), which has overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property has provided the following observations to the Area Board on behalf of Wiltshire Council.

12. No plan was supplied with the application, but there is an assumption that the area requested is that currently leased by the applicant.
13. The existing lease of Marden House has expired but is continuing on a periodic basis by operation of law.
14. A legal process to rectify the titles to this land and that which was transferred to Calne Town Council (Castlefields) is being carried out. A lease cannot be granted until this has been completed. This process is to ensure that the boundaries on the title plans reflect what is on the ground.

Main issues for consideration by the Area Board

15. The applicant has confirmed that the area requested is that currently leased by the applicant. (see para. 11 above).
16. It is a requirement under Wiltshire Council's Asset Transfer Policy that there must be a clear link between the asset transfer request and local community priorities.
17. This proposed asset transfer demonstrates a link to Wiltshire Council's priorities to "Help local communities develop their own priorities and improvements "and "We help communities help themselves".
18. It can also be seen to link to local JSA priorities for the Calne Community Area relating to Children & Young People, Older People, Culture and Health & Wellbeing.
19. As this is a third sector transfer and not a transfer to a town or parish council it will be effected by way of a 125-year lease. If the property stops being used for the community purpose the lease may be terminated by Wiltshire Council.

Recommendation

20. Having considered the application and the views of Council officers, the Area Board is invited to approve the transfer subject to:
 - The lease being upon such terms as Wiltshire Council Estates considers reasonable.
 - The ability for Wiltshire Council to terminate the lease if the property ceases to be used for community purposes.
 - Each party bearing their own costs.

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Community Asset Transfer application Appendix 2 – Summary of Community Consultation
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